

## Young People's Societies

### A YEAR WITH GOD.

Topic for Sunday, January 2: Through this year with God. Numbers 9:15-23; 10:10.

#### DAILY READINGS.

Monday: In his work. John 9:1-17.  
 Tuesday: In my labor. Ephesians 6:5-20.  
 Wednesday: In my home. Joshua 24:14-24.  
 Thursday: In my church. Hebrews 10:19-25.  
 Friday: With my Bible. Psalm 1.  
 Saturday: With his spirit. Galatians 5:16-26.

With hearts given to Christ at Christmastide, when we were giving presents to those we love, it ought not to be hard for us to give our lives to God this year.

A sincere gift of the heart will make a consecrated life easy to render. It will be no task to serve if we love. Duty and delight, spelled with the same letters, will settle all the difficulties.

"A year with God" means twelve months, fifty-two weeks, three hundred and sixty-five days—not a single month or a single week of a good resolution impulsively made and gradually forgotten or neglected.

If the resolutions of the beginning of the year are not to be "resolutely" kept, it were better not to make them. "Better is it that thou shouldst not vow than that thou shouldst vow and not pay." All hasty resolutions are unkept vows.

Yet all things must have a start. There is nothing wrong in making large promises as long as one does it with full determination to keep them. It is unpaid vows, not unmade vows, that are to be avoided and condemned.

The year is before us. But one day of it has passed. We are in the full flush of its beginning, and this is its first Sabbath day. It is a suitable time to determine whose it shall be, ours or God's, the world's or the Saviour's. The choice ought to be made promptly.

The first week may be made a type of the remaining fifty-one. In it our lives may strike the note that shall ring through all. If that note be in harmony with God, it will make a year of music like that of Heaven. The conditions all favor a start which will not augur, but insure, success through the year.

While we contemplate the whole year, however, let us not forget that it is to come one day at a time. Its duties, if looked at altogether, will appall us. Taken one at a time, or a day at a time, they will be easily possible and comfortable. God suggests as much and promises as much. Listen to his words: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

The year is therefore to be begun with entire confidence. God will be with us at every step. Each day will witness his loving presence. His hand will be stretched out to help at every difficult place. His strength will be made perfect in our weakness. Each act of grace, from the first, will be succeeded by another, and with increasing assurance of his companionship.

The year may have in store for you providences which you would not like to face just now. God is wise to draw a curtain across the scene. But along with this fact is a better and sweeter fact. It is that present duty performed and present trust reposed will be the best preparation for the coming of events which may cause our hearts to faint within us.

Just as much, however, the year may have in store for us surprises in prosperity or advancement or success. It is wise again in God to hide these from our view, for else we would become too soon elated and forget present duty, or we would become idle and presumptuous. But we need preparation for successes as well as adversity or grief. It can be had through faithfulness now and on each day following as it comes in the year.

We learn gradually that the Creator made no mistakes in the ordering of the physical universe. Why should we fear that there is something wrong in the present ordering of his providence?

## Prayer Meeting

### TOPIC—GOING OUT AND COMING IN.

Psalms 121.

Week Beginning December 26.

It is altogether probable that those who selected the prayer meeting topics for the year intended that our meditations should at this time be directed to the going out of the present year and the coming in of the next. The Psalm which is assigned as a text does not bear especially upon this topic, but rather is intended to teach the safety of those who put their trust in God, and the ground upon which that security rests. The theme is a delightful one, and this is a beautiful Psalm. The promise is that "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in," or, as elsewhere expressed, "He shall keep thee in all thy ways." We may treasure at all times the teaching of the Psalm. For the present let us address our thoughts to the blessings of the closing year and the proportionate responsibilities of the new year that is to follow.

The Secretary of Agriculture informs us that the value of the products of the soil this year is greater than that of any other year in our history as a people. It is, therefore, greater than that of any nation in any age of the world. Agriculture is the basis of our national wealth. In certain other departments of industry this nation leads the world. The products of our mines and forests are immense. Manufacturing industries are varied and numerous, and many of them are projected on an enormous scale. Systems of transportation are the wonder of the modern world, but none of these compare in their contribution to the national wealth with the response of soil and atmosphere to the skill and industry of our people who are engaged in agricultural pursuits.

The figures that are presented by the Secretary are so vast as to almost baffle our comprehension. The total valuation of farm products for the year is \$3,760,000,000, which represents a gain of \$869,000,000 over the year preceding. Of this amount the value of the corn crop is first, being \$1,720,000,000. This is equal in value to all the gold and silver coin and bullion of the United States. Considering the time the crop is growing, these figures indicate an increase of wealth at the rate of \$15,000,000 per day for the corn crop alone. Next to corn comes cotton, our exclusive Southern product, valued at \$850,000,000. The next is wheat, whose value is estimated at \$725,000,000. The hay crop is placed at \$665,000,000; oats, \$400,000,000; potatoes, \$212,000,000; tobacco, nearly \$100,000,000. The value of farm products has doubled in the last eleven years, the total for that period reaching the enormous sum of seventy billions of dollars. When it is remembered that this wealth is the product of soil and atmosphere, and not the hoarded wealth of speculation in values already created, what a revelation it is of the advancing prosperity of our people under the providential favor of him who gives "rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness!"

Looking to the future, it becomes us seriously to inquire whether God's bounty to us, as a people, shall be utilized to the enrichment of our people in character, and especially in receiving and cultivating the fruits of divine grace. Shall we be a more generous, sympathetic, self-denying, spiritually-minded people because of God's manifest bounty, or shall we yield to the tendency to become more sordid, more grasping, more materialistic and therefore more gross and degraded in our character as citizens of the great modern commonwealth of the world? Unless our possessions are wisely used, they will become to us a calamity rather than a blessing. If only native tendencies prevail in the hearts of the people, this result will most certainly ensue. There must be moral and spiritual forces proportionate to the material, which will effectually direct and dignify these else the blessings of our God will be perverted by the people who receive them into a curse.

The analogies of history are against us. The empires that have grown strong in wealth and eminent in art and letters and diplomacy in the past have had their foundations de-